NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

STRIPCROPPING

(acre)
Code 585

DEFINITION

Growing row crops, forage, small grains, or fallow in a systematic arrangement of equal width strips across a field.

PURPOSE

- Reduce soil erosion from water and transport of sediment and other water-borne contaminants.
- Reduce soil erosion from wind.
- Protect growing crops from damage by wind-borne soil particles

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on cropland or other land where crops are grown.

CRITERIA

Number of Strips. A stripcropping system shall consist of two or more strips.

Alignment of Tillage and Planting Operations. All tillage and planting operations will follow the strip line established.

Strip lines will be laid out across the general slope of the field. Strips maybe placed on the contour on sloping land to achieve effective erosion control from water.

When wind erosion is a concern, strips shall be oriented as close to perpendicular to the prevailing wind erosion direction as practical.

All planting and tillage operations will be parallel to the grass or close-growing crop strips.

Width of Strip, The required width of the strips shall be determined using currently approved erosion prediction technologies to achieve the planned erosion reduction.

Vegetative Cover. Vegetation in a stripcropping arrangement consists of crops and/or forages grown in a planned rotation.

No two adjacent strips shall be in an erosion-susceptible condition at the same time during the year. However, two adjacent strips may be in erosion-resistant cover at the same time.

Erosion-resistant strips shall be crops or crop residues that provide the needed protective cover during those critical periods when erosion is expected to occur.

Acceptable protective cover includes a growing crop, including grasses, legumes, or grass-legume mixtures, standing stubble, residue with enough surface cover to provide protection or surface roughness sufficient to provide protection.

Keep the clean-tilled crop or fallow strip the same width across the field in order to avoid point rows. Strip shall be adjusted to fit the size of the planting and harvesting equipment. The width of the grass or a close-growing crop strip can be adjusted to accomplish this.

The latest approved soil and wind erosion prediction technology will be used to determine the effectiveness of field stripcropping.

The Practice Factor (“P”) will be calculated from the respective “P” value table(s) in Chapter 6 of the Florida Agronomy Field Handbook.

Stripcropping shall be used in conjunction with other conservation practices (diversions, grass waterways, field borders, crop residue use and conservation tillage) for more effective erosion control.

CONSIDERATIONS

Water Quantity

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
2. Variability of practice's effects caused by seasonal weather variations.
3. Potential for a change in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

Water Quality

1. Filtering effects of vegetation on movement of sediment and dissolved and/or sediment-attached substances.
2. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
3. Potential for development of saline seeps or other salinity problems resulting from increased infiltration near restrictive layers.
4. Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for each field or treatment unit according to the criteria, considerations, and operations and maintenance described in this standard.

Specifications shall be recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

Width of Strip.

Percent Slope 1/	Max. Width of Clean-Tilled Crop or Fallow Strip	Min. Width of Grass or a Close-Growing Crop Strip
1 to 2	150 feet	20 feet
3 to 8	100 feet	25 feet

1/ As each new strip is laid out, measure the land slope from the lower edge of the previous strip.

Grass or a Close-Growing Crop:

Any of the adapted pasture grasses, with or without legumes, may be used for strips. In addition, small grain or other close-growing crops may be used if they provide a good cover when the cultivated area is most susceptible to erosion. See Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512, or the Florida Agronomy Field Handbook for recommended species, seeding rates, and fertility recommendations.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain a good cover in the strip by periodically applying lime and fertilizer according to soil tests and needs of the crop. Apply according to Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Nutrient Management, Code 590. Weeds should be controlled by mowing or application of approved herbicides. If herbicides are used, read and follow all label warnings and directions. Apply herbicides and/or pesticides according to Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Pest Management, Code 595. Timing of mowing or herbicide applications should be based on wildlife considerations.

Avoid soil build-up at the up-slope edge of the grass or close-growing crop strip due to tillage or sedimentation. Avoid creation of furrows that will channel water down the side of the grass or close-growing crop strip rather than through the grass or close-growing crop strip.

REFERENCES

NRCS Conservation Practice Standards

- Nutrient Management, Code 590
- Pest Management, Code 595
- Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512

Florida Agronomy Field Handbook
Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation
Florida Erosion Control Handbook